



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE OFFERS REWARD FOR INFORMATION IN FATAL SHOOTING OF SEA LION

NOAA Fisheries Service's Office for Law Enforcement (OLE) is offering a \$2,500 reward for information about the shooting death of a Steller sea lion on the Lummi Indian Reservation near Bellingham, Wash. Information must lead to an arrest, conviction, civil penalty assessment or forfeiture of property for any violations against those responsible.

The male sea lion was discovered January 15, 2006 on Neptune Beach approximately one mile north of Sandy Point Shores in Whatcom County. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife enforcement officers assisted with the necropsy and are aiding OLE special agents in the investigation of the illegal "take" of this animal.

Stellar sea lions are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and are additionally protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA).

The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) of 1972 is a federal law established to protect seals, sea lions, dolphins, whales and all other species of marine mammals. Under the MMPA and its corresponding regulations, it is illegal to harass, shoot, pursue or feed marine mammals in the wild. A violation of the act is considered a "take" and can result in civil penalties of up to \$12,000 and criminal fines of up to \$20,000 and imprisonment.

The ESA protects fish, wildlife, and plants that have been so depleted in numbers that they are in danger of or threatened with extinction. Under the ESA it is illegal to kill, harass, or harm any listed species. Any person convicted violating the ESA can face civil and criminal penalties up to \$50,000 and a year in jail.

NOAA Fisheries Service asks any citizen with information concerning this incident to please call one of the following numbers:

Special Agents Brubaker or Bowyer:	360-676-9268
OLE Hotline:	800-853-1964

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

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The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

** Any officer or employee of the United States or of any Foreign, State or local government, or their family members, who furnishes information or renders service in the performance of his official duties shall not be eligible for payment under this reward offer.*